

# Magazine Feature Section

## HOW STARS TWINKLE WHEN THEY CHANGE TEAMS

It Is This Switch in Orbits Which Determines the Real Power of the Baseball Luminary Who, Under Some Circumstances Might Merely Glow with Reflected Light.

**T**HE real test of the baseball star comes when he changes his orbit, or, in other words, is switched to some other team. This holds true when the change consists of merely changing from one major league aggregation to another or when he is switched from the minors to the majors.

Of course, everyone realizes when a youngster arrives from the bushes and breaks into the big game he is facing the real test of his diamond career. Sometimes he stands it but, far oftener, the player who has stood head and shoulders above his fellow players in some minor league, even of the class of double A, fails miserably in faster company, and plays like the veriest amateur. Sometimes he returns to the minors, and, after a season or two, is brought back into major baseball. Perhaps he makes good this time. Perhaps not. There is just a little something lacking. In some cases it is a question of pure nerve.

Players can tell you of any number of instances of men coming up from the minors who possessed the necessary ability to hold a major league job and yet failed through lack of nerve. From the grand stand this would appear almost impossible and yet it happens and happens often.

Then again it is not lack of this nerve. Take the case of Charley Hall—great pitcher in a class AA league. He has been up thrice in the majors and the first two times he was sent back. Last year he made a great record with St. Paul in the American Association, and the Cardinals obtained him. This year he has shown little or nothing of the skill which made him one of the stars of the Association, and in the National League he is almost last among the pitchers, in fact, the brand of ball played there is superior to what the National League showed last year, and it would be thought that Hall, who held his own and ranked right with the leaders all of 1915, would make some kind of showing in the National this year. But he hasn't, and this probably will be his last chance in fast company, for he is not a youngster. Eugene Paulette is another player who has shone brightly in the minors, and yet has been unable to hold a job in the majors after several trials. Why recount more cases? There are dozens of others.

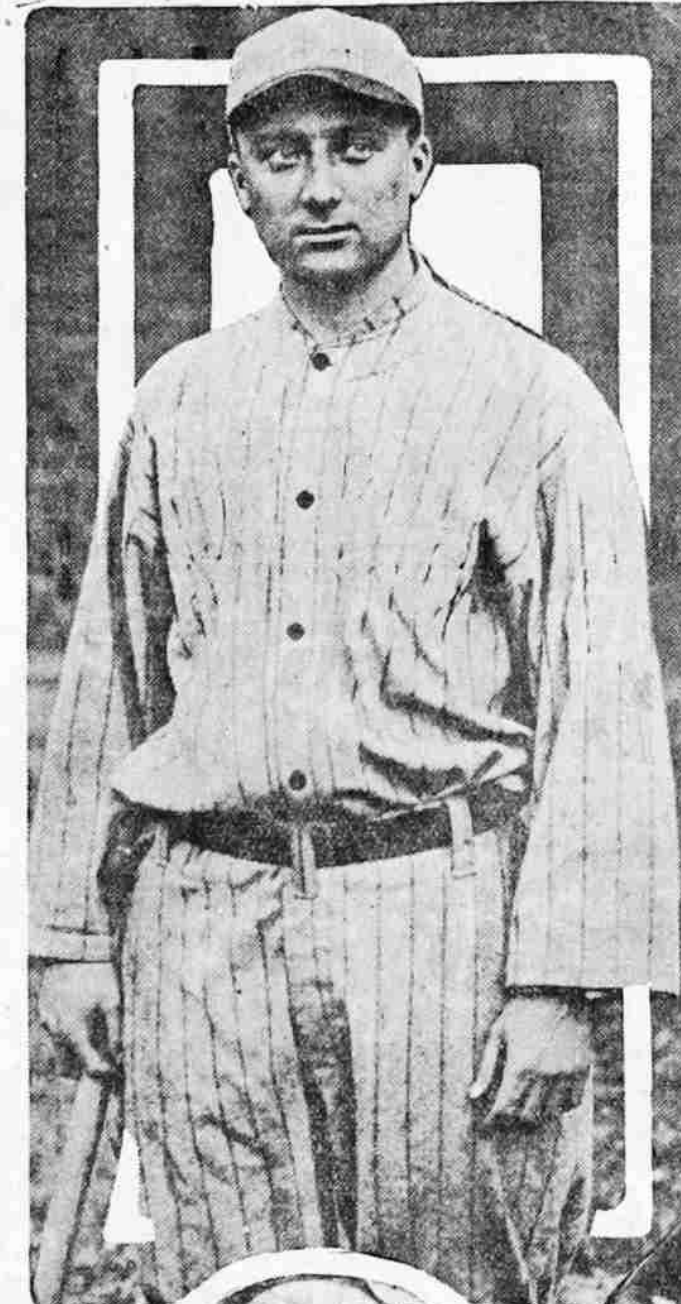
But take the cases of a star player being transferred from one major league to another if he stands the test he is a real star. As remarked before, some do and some don't.

In the former class is Hal Chase, the greatest first basemen of the game for some years and still far ahead of all rivals. He has played on four teams in the past five years, and yet he has played the same wonderful game with each team. And this means in batting as well as fielding, for he is a .300 hitter right now and should end the season around this mark. With Cincinnati this year he is playing some of the best ball of his career, despite the fact that any number of experts predicted that he and Herzog could remain together on the same team not longer than two or three months. Both of them are firebrands in a way. It is no secret that Hal is temperamental and likewise it is no secret that Herzog is hot-headed and believes in driving his men, but if there has been any trouble between the manager and his star the public knows nothing of it, and it certainly has not affected Chase's game.

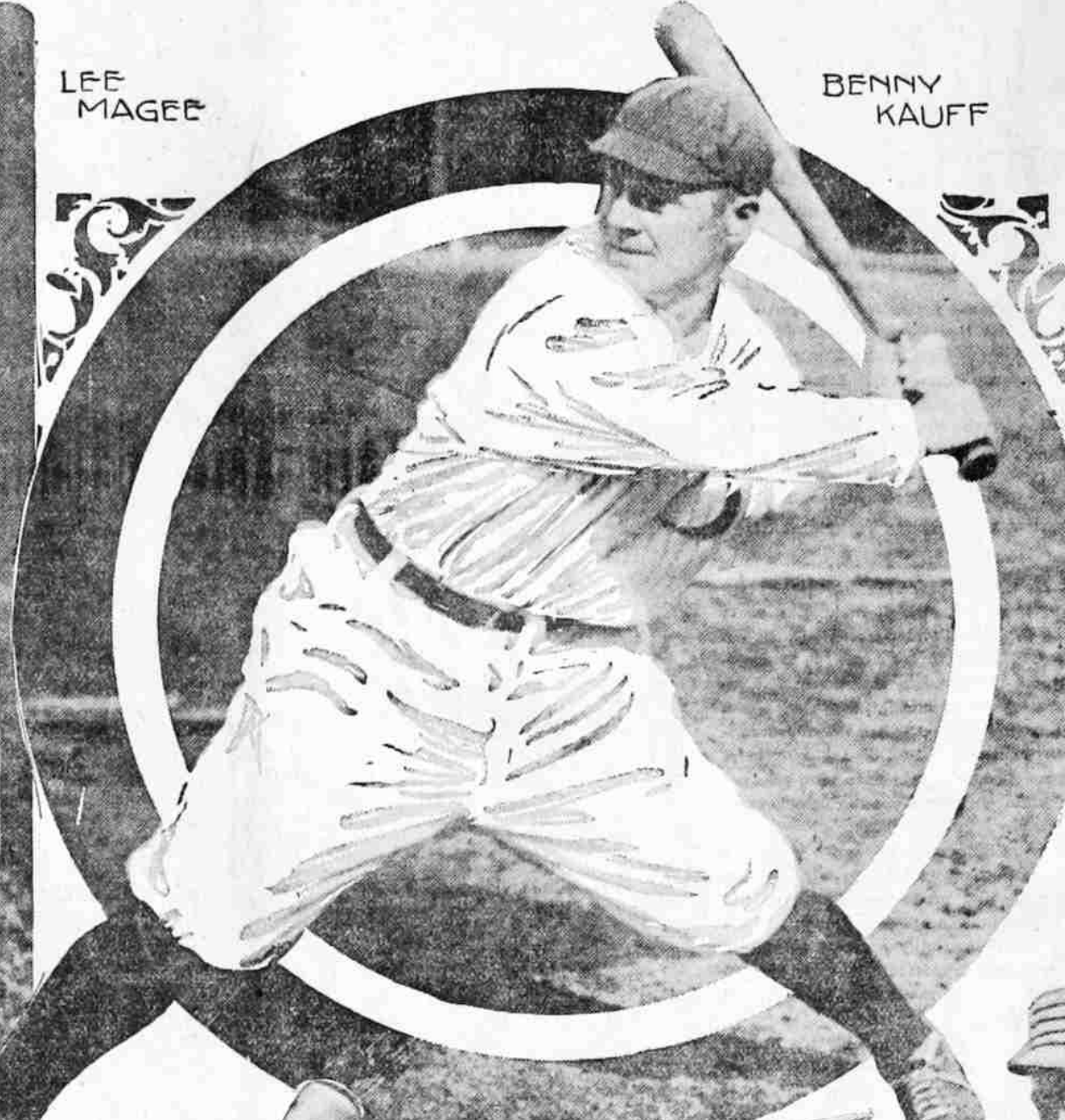
What's the matter with Eddie Collins? Last year, when he was obtained by the White Sox, together with several other stars it was predicted that the Chicago entry would run away with the pennant. But it didn't. Collins put up a fine game, batting .322, and ranking second among the second basemen in fielding, but somehow or other he didn't seem the same Collins who formed one-fourth of Connie Mack's famous infield, and the White Sox did not run away with the pennant.

This year he appears even less the Collins of the old Athletics. He is batting around the .240 mark, and he doesn't seem to be the same great fielder he was a few years ago. Why? It is not due to age, because Collins is still comparatively young and he is as smart as any player in the game. Is it that the change in teams is just beginning to tell on him, or what?

Take the case also of "Home-run" Baker, another fourth of that great Athletic infield. Never a wonderful fielder, it was his slugging ability that helped the Athletics to win league championships and world's pennants. Every reader



LEE MAGEE



BENNY KAUFF



EDDIE PLANK



EDDIE COLLINS



TRIS SPEAKER



FRANK BAKER

of baseball gossip knows the history of his differences with Connie Mack, of his refusal to play with the Athletics last year. And every one knows how he was obtained by the New York Yankees this spring, when the owners of that club were out with plenty of money with the avowed intention of buying every first-class player obtainable, in an effort to get a winning ball team. They bought the players, including Baker, but the club isn't winning more than its share of games.

Some expert, after the sale of Baker to the Yankees, predicted he would not hit the ball as hard as he did with the Athletics, because he would not have Eddie Collins to precede him in the batting order. It was pointed out that Collins, who often was on base when Baker was at bat, distracted the attention of the pitcher to such an extent that the latter was not able to pitch his best to Baker, and hence the latter had a comparatively easy time piling up a nice fat batting average. This is rather far-fetched, however, although it is a fact that Baker is hitting far from his form of 1914 and several previous seasons. His batting average is about the same as Collins' or less, and he had proven a bitter disappointment to the New York fans, who had counted on him to help Donovan win a pennant. What is the trouble? No one is able to say. Of course, there are dozens of experts who will tell you that it was Baker's year's rest which spoiled his batting arm and his eye. But many cases can be cited in which a rest has not injured a player's batting.

Baker is on a team which also has on its roster several other great individual stars, and yet the team is not going good. Was it merely the switching from the Athletics, a team composed of men, each of whom knew the other's system of play to a dot, and each of whom worked as a single cog in a perfect machine? It would appear so.

On the same team is another player, hailed

as a star by the New York experts when he joined the Yankees—Lee Magee. Magee was a sterling player in the National League. He hit around the .280 and .290 mark, fielded fairly well, and could be used on first and second base, as well as in the outfield. There were many who predicted he would become one of the great stars of the game. Others, however, contended that his record in his last year in the National League was about as good as he would ever make.

Then he jumped to the Federal League and immediately became one of the slugging stars of that circuit. Hence, when he went to the Yankees after the dissolution of the Federal League there was a burst of hysteria on the part of the New York experts. He was hailed by one of them as the "superman of baseball," and the praises heaped on him were only second to the ones heaped on Kauff and Baker when they were obtained by New York clubs. In fact, the sport writers of Gotham vied with each other as to who could praise

this trio in the most extravagant language. The answer? Magee has proven even more of a disappointment than Baker.

The experts didn't take into consideration the fact that Magee had never faced pitchers of American League caliber. The pitching of the National League had been notoriously weak, and Magee was even weaker. The experts seemed to think Magee would break into the league and immediately begin slugging somewhere about the one thousand mark—at least their language led one to judge this was their belief.

It is probable that neither Magee nor Kauff gave utterance to all the idiotic things the Eastern papers credited or charged them with saying, and it is hardly probable that Lee said, as one paper quoted him, "Of course, a man can't expect to lead a league in which Ty Cobb plays, but even to rank second to him is an honor." Lee probably didn't say these words, but no one has ever accused him of underestimating his own ability. But he is hit-

DAVE DAVENPORT

ting between the .220 and .230 marks, and it would appear that in this instance the changing of the orbit had a considerable effect on this star.

Benny Kauff is hitting around the .270 mark, which is something like a hundred points below what his admirers predicted for him last spring, but he is putting up a much better game than Magee or Collins or Baker, and he is hitting the ball hard and timely. Kauff has shown better this year than any of the other Federal stars. He was the bright particular star of the Gilmore circuit last year, but he evidently has learned that the National League pitching is different from the Federal League brand. At that Kauff may end the season close to the .300 mark. He is still young and has much more intelligence than one would believe, if he believed the remarks attributed to him last spring by the New York sport writers.

At that one wonders if he would be hitting as well as he is if he had to face the American League brand of pitching, as Magee does. Tris Speaker is the one great star whose light is even brighter than when he changed team this spring. He is generally given credit for the great showing the Cleveland team is making, and there is no question but that his slugging has helped the team wonderfully. This is one case in which the acquisition of one real star has brought a team to the front in a pennant race, and it would be a huge joke on every one, sport writers, experts, fans and the general public if the despised Indians should land first in October. Speaker is hitting above the .350 mark, and Cobb will have to hustle if he expects to finish the season in first place.

Plank and Davenport, pitching stars of the Federal League, have proven dismal failures against the heavy sluggers of the American circuit. Their cases were similar to those of Magee

and Kauff—they faced a far stronger opposition in the American than in the Federal League.

### Cure 'Speeditis'

A NEW court, termed a clinic by some, for the cure of "speeditis" among owners and drivers of autos and motorcycles, has been established in New York City. The court will handle solely cases of violation of the traffic ordinances.

Frederick B. House, appointed judge of the court, says that the best treatment for the disease is "50 and cents," and that the court will endeavor to apply the remedy consistently, in an effort to stamp out the disease, which has become rather widespread in that city.

THERE have been fewer outbreaks on the baseball field this year than last. Why? Are the players losing their "fizz"? Is the fighting spirit of the olden days dying out? Or what is the matter? The old-time fan is often heard deploring the absence of the "fighting spirit" of the olden days, a spirit which was supposed to manifest itself by real fighting on the diamond, and they mean, "The good old days have passed away."

But the old-time fan does not realize that baseball is progressing year by year, and nothing is more noticeable in this progression than the improved behavior on the ball field. At one time, according to these old-timers, it was the custom for the members of one team to go to blows with the members of the other team, or for a player and an umpire to engage in a battle. Perhaps this didn't occur as often as the old-timers remember now, but at any rate those days have passed away, and gentlemenly behavior is the rule on the ball field. Seldom it is that players come to blows now, or that an umpire is in real danger of physical violence. In fact, this year, there have been no occurrences along this line worthy of more than passing mention.

The public likes a scrappy player of the Herzog type, but Herzog is one of the few men in the game who know how to make a noise and bluster and then stop before he goes too far. But the high officials of baseball want no rowdism on the field and they are determined not to have any. Likewise the public doesn't want it. Every year there are more and more women attending the games, and these have had a refining influence on the game.